News Release: Ottawa - 3 March 1987

"Bricks"
1102-258 Lisgar St.,
Ottawa. K2P 0C9

What can I say? -

Fresh-Air Brick ads cleared by government

By Norman Provencher
Citizen staff writer

A freelance film producer's tongue-in-cheek solution for people like him who get sick from the poor air in office buildings has received a no-nonsense response from the government.

After reviewing Chris Brown's ads in union newsletters for the "Fresh-Air Bricks," the consumer affairs department's bureau of competition policy has decided there's nothing improper about them.

The ads show a brick and a broken window and ask the question: "Tired of Stale Air?"

There's nothing of particular value in the product, the bureau says, but the ads don't claim there is.

"The individual seems to be making a semi-political statement with this product, and he makes no claims other than saying the bricks will draw attention to your air complaints," said a department official who requested his name be withheld.

Brown's attempt to find out whether the ads would be a problem prompted a bureau official to alert Consumer Affairs Minister Harvie Andre, who then called for an investigation of the ads.

The bricks cost $9.95 except for pregnant women, who get two bricks free, and those who are "part of the problem," who are charged $99.95. Brown says they are a statement on behalf of the thousands of others like him who suffer from environmental hypersensitivity.

Government offices, which include such infamous bad-air buildings as the Terrasse de la "Shoddy-Air" (Chaudière) in Hull, has been fertile ground for Brown's brick scheme.

"The point has been to wake people up, and to get the authorities to pay attention," he said.

According to letters he's received, word of mouth has taken news of his scheme across Canada.

"We've sold about 100 bricks (in the last two months), but it's more important people know about the problem."

It seems this government can spend time reviewing fund-raising ads for the disabled, so perhaps some day soon The Hon Mr. Jake Epp will have time to do something about the fact that the environment has deteriorated so much it is causing thousands of Canadians to develop disabilities, three-quarters of them women.

Since the last news release we've not only been cleared of any suspicion of false advertising, but the "FRESH AIR Brick" is now registered as a bona fide medical device. The Bureau of Radiation and Medical Devices has registered the "FRESH AIR Brick" as a "radiation-free ceramic medical device useful in the field of preventive medicine".

What can I say? - The Hon Bernard Valcourt, Minister of State for Small Business, found it in his gentle heart to suggest we take advantage of DRIE money to set up a manufacturing plant to produce "FRESH AIR Bricks". One of his staff helpfully sent along a map (enclosed) of favoured regional development areas in our part of the country. The Hon Mr. Valcourt also graciously invited us to take advantage of business counselling available at the Federal Business Development Bank. People in your area may be pleased to find out this government is so willing to help.

Soon maybe The Honourable Mr. Epp will correct the tiny misunderstanding caused when Health and Welfare officials mistakenly said environmental hypersensitivity, which has since been found to affect thousands, didn't exist. (Ooops.) As long as that mistake continues stand, many with the condition will remain unaware that low level pollution is what's causing their symptoms, which can range from mild discomfort to total disability, and death. Several other cabinet ministers and their staff have expressed concern that some of the disabled have committed suicide because of the atmosphere of suspicion and distrust Health and Welfare has helped create. Of course, thousands more will become disabled as long as the problem is not recognized and addressed.

Thanks

Chris Brown
(613) 237 0928

What about women in Canada?

Business

AT&T banning pregnant women from chip manufacturing lines

By Mitchel Benson
Knight-Ridder

SAN JOSE, Calif. — AT&T has become the U.S.'s first semiconductor manufacturer to ban pregnant women from production lines because of concern about the employees' exposure to chemicals that might cause miscarriages.

Officials at American Telephone & Telegraph Co. implemented the policy in December after learning about a health study in Massachusetts that reported an increased rate of miscarriages among chip production workers.

Most chip manufacturers have responded to the study — first reported by the *San Jose Mercury News* on Dec. 5 — by restatin their existing policies of offer transfers to pregnant produc workers, if other jobs are a ble. Some, like AT&T, hav ranteed other jobs. But Silicon Valley firms, ci weak economic conditio industry, have not off guarantees.

No other company far as banning pre from chip producti assortment of are used uits c ust

Equipment study — and conduct follow-up research — before chip makers can m intelligent changes in wor itions, processes and p

"Changes t will be studi force meeti of Massac tional inf of Digit ther st said envi hea SI

comparable pay and benefits for any pregnant production workers. Digital Equipment also is guaranteeing jobs for women production workers of child-bearing age, offering free pregnancy tests for ployees and offering special onsideration to men pro- ers who plan to be

women at sylvan- ve

Pesticides creating armies of super bugs, say scientists

CHICAGO (UPI) — Humans are losing the battle against insects by using more pesticides than common sense, creating armies of invincible "monster bugs" no product on the market can stop, experts warned Wednesday.

Insect resistance, growing with each new chemical challenge, threatens global agriculture and international health and costs about $2 billion annually, said Brian Croft, a professor of entomology at Oregon State University.

"We have definitely created a big problem for ourselves," he said.

Robert Metcalf, professor of biology and entomology at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, said: "The short-sighted and irresponsible use of pesticides . . . is producing strains of monster bugs. There are now about 30 species that nothing can kill."

The insect experts gathered Wednesday at the American Association for the Advance Science annual mo posium int

years and almost $2 billion before giving up in 1976; all they had to show for their effort was a race of malaria-carrying mosquitos virtually immune to all applicable insecticides.

• Cotton bollworms "weren't a big problem" until farmers decided to spray them. "Most of them were fairly well regulated by their natural predators and when we started throwing pesticides all over the place, we killed our friends," Metcalf said.

• Since 1950, the destructive Colorado potato beetle has been treated with 15 different insecticides and now enjoys a sort of blanket immunity.

Metcalf and Croft contend these cases need not have happened and that prudent "integrated pest management" may prevent future such occurrences.

"The main thing is want to give an looks at

Canada

Warning sounded about mercury in dental fillings

By Rod Ludlow
Southam News

Mercury from dental fillings may be accumulating in our bodies in toxic amounts, according to research at the University of Calgary.

Dr. Murray Vimy and Dr. Fritz Lorscheider believe long-term exposure to mercury vapor from fillings could have serious effects on the nervous system and may be causing allergy problems for millions of North Americans.

"We can conclude that some people are being exposed to vapor levels far in excess of what is considered safe," Vimy says.

Metal alloy fillings have been used for 150 years and the modern amalgam used in "silver" fillings is really 50 per cent mercury and 35 per cent silver.

Dr. Ralph Barolet, chairman of the Canadian Dental Association's Council of Dental Materials and Devices, says mercury "is a material with toxic potential but I honestly don't think dentistry has been mass poisoning the population of the world for 150 years."

U.S. studies in the early 1980s showed that mercury vapor levels in expired air increased as much as 30 times after chewing and also increased with the number of fillings.

Some people showed levels that exceeded the U.S Environmental Protection Agency limit of 50 micrograms from all sources for a 40-hour work week.

Blood mercury levels in people with fillings were double to triple those of people without and the levels were similar to results of another U.S. study that showed a significant link between stillbirths and deformities and blood mercury levels in expectant mothers.

In 1984, Vimy and Lorscheider measured mouth air before inhalation and found that post-chewing mercury vapor levels in people with fillings was 54 times higher than those without and that mercury vapor levels still approached or exceeded several international mercury exposure limits two hours after chewing.

The researchers believe their figures "substantially underestimate" true mercury levels because they did not account for exposure from non-eating inhalation and other absorption.

Symptoms of chronic long-term exposure to mercury can range from a metallic taste in the mouth, skin rash, depression and insomnia to muscle weakness, tremors, migraines, heart palpitations, irritability, memory loss, inability to concentrate and birth deformities.

Mercury is also known to depress the immune system and a preliminary study in California suggests dental mercury may suppress T-lymphocyte cells, the same immune failure involved in AIDS.

Work in a Sealed Building?

Tired of Stale Air?

Try our New Product!

FRESH AIR BRICKS

Fresh Air Bricks **are guaranteed to focus attention on your "Shoddy Air" problems – especially if used according to instructions.***

- **Use two bricks for cross-flow ventilation!**
- **Send one with a message to your target!**
- **Delivered in anonymous brown paper wrapping.**

* **Guaranteed for one-time use only.**

RUSH my Fresh Air Brick today –

☐ I'd like a Fresh Air Brick to keep on my desk.

☐ I'd like a Fresh Air Brick for its functional applications.

☐ I'm pregnant. Rush two bricks for me and my baby, FREE!

☐ I'm part of the problem – I agree to pay $99.95 for my brick.

☐ Here's $9.95. Send my brick to:

_____

with the message:

_____

_____

Send your cheque or money order to: **Bricks**
1102-258 Lisgar Street
Ottawa K2P 0C9

Bricks may bring fresh air to stuffy sealed-up buildings

By Trish Dyer
Special to The Star

OTTAWA — Tired of being in that stuffy office building? Longing for a breath of fresh air?

Chris Brown may have the answer — a Fresh Air brick. He's selling them to remind people what life is like for those who are made ill by chemical fumes in poorly ventilated buildings.

The freelance film producer says he is one of thousands of Canadians who suffer from environmental hypersensitivity — in his case to petrochemical fumes, including those given off by newsprint and duplicating machine inks, some laundry products and vehicle exhaust.

This means the former Canadian Broadcasting Corp. reporter cannot work in most conventional offices without some type of built-in window fan.

Brown, 36, is hoping his bricks will build a bridge to better understanding of the difficulties he and fellow sufferers face.

He has spent most of the past year lobbying federal cabinet ministers in a one-man campaign aimed at improving environmental standards in federally owned office buildings such as Hull's Terrace de la Chaudiere, known locally as Terrace de la Shoddy-Air.

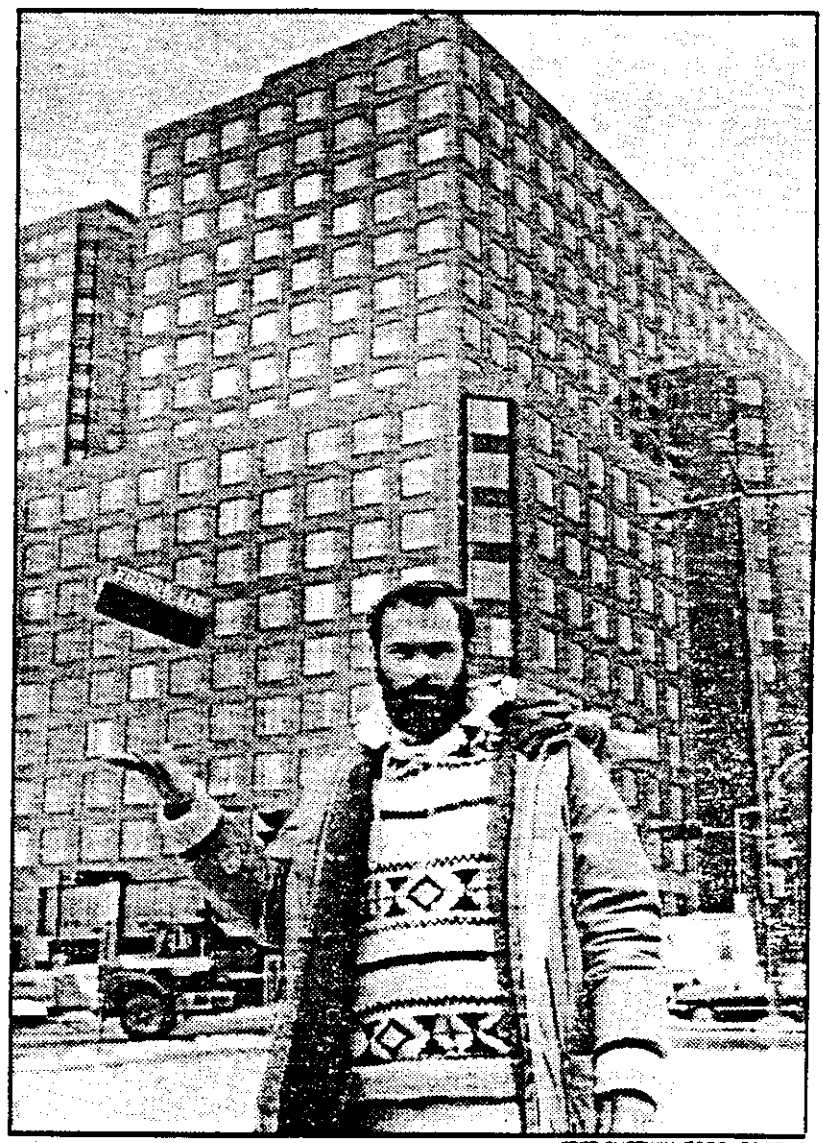
His bricks, emblazoned with the words Fresh Air, are intended to symbolize a safer working environment to those who spend their days behind sealed windows.

Brown says he does not view the bricks "as a hot Christmas item," and will wait until January to follow up 60 to 70 information sheets he has mailed out across the province.

However, he says, he has already sold about 100 bricks "at $9.95 each, shipping included," and says he is prepared to continue for some time.

"I'm not selling the bricks to make money. The idea is to create a self-perpetuating consciousness-raising campaign," he said.

"The $2 or so I get back on each brick will go to advertising more, and so on."



FRED SHERWIN/TORONTO STAR

Heave-ho: Chris Brown has been lobbying federal officials for cleaner air in buildings such as Terrace de la Chaudiere, in Hull, Que. The building is known locally as Terrace de la Shoddy-Air.

Ministre d'État
Petites entreprises et Tourisme

CANADA

Minister of State
Small Businesses and Tourism

L'honorable The Honourable

Bernard Valcourt

JAN 21 1987

Mr. Chris Brown
Bricks
1102 - 258 Lisgar Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 0C9

Dear Mr. Brown:

Thank you for your letter of November 1, 1986 concerning your request for information on federal programs for small business.

In this regard, I have requested officials of the Ontario Regional Office of the Department of the Regional Industrial Expansion (DRIE) to contact you in order to explore in detail the avenues of assistance that may be available to you.

You should be aware that this Department administers the Industrial and Regional Development Program (IRDP) which may be a possible source of support for your company if you are manufacturing this product. I understand that Mr. N. Bacchus, (416) 365-3725, of the Department's Ontario Regional Office sent you an information package on the IRDP by mail on December 8, 1986.

Assistance may also be available to your company through the Federal Business Development Bank (FBDB). Bank financing may be provided through loan or loan guarantees. In addition, the FBDB provides counselling and management training programs. For further information, you may wish to contact Mr. Frances Roy, Manager at the FBDB branch office at the following location:

... 2

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H5

Federal Business Development Bank
280 Albert Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G8
Tel. (613) 995-0234.

May I take this opportunity to wish you every success with your venture.

Yours truly,

Bernard Valcourt

Physicians blame acid rain for some breathing problems

WASHINGTON (AP) — The raw materials for acid rain are worsening breathing problems among many people exposed to them, four physicians told a U.S. Senate subcommittee Tuesday.

"You must convince yourself that more than trees are dying," said one of them, Dr. Anthony Robbins, professor of public health at Boston University, appearing for the American Public Health Association. He is a past president of the group.

Robbins spoke at a hearing of the Senate environment and public works committee's subcommittee on environmental pollution. Senator George Mitchell (D-Me.), the subcommittee chairman, called the hearing as one of a series leading to action on bills to require major reductions in emissions of acid rain precursors.

The witnesses said there are no studies that would permit scientists to say a decrease in emissions by so much would yield so many fewer deaths or hospital admissions.

But there is no doubt that elevated concentrations of sulphur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen and ozone lead to increased hospital admissions, they said.

Studies by the Harvard School of Public Health in six cities show increased pulmonary illness when sulphate mists are high, said Dr. Philip Landrigan, director of environmental and occupational medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City.

Similar results are seen in studies of children at summer camps in Pennsylvania and of children in southern Ontario. The Canadian findings are particularly important because they show the same pattern, summer after summer, of increased hospital admissions for asthma, bronchitis and other problems with increased pollution, he said.

"Considerations of cost and benefits pale when they are applied to the health of children," said Landrigan.

Air pollution is exacting "a staggering cost in morbidity and dollars," said Dr. Richard Narkewicz, a Burlington, Vt. pediatrician who is president-elect of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

He said physicians can only advise parents to keep children indoors during severe pollution.